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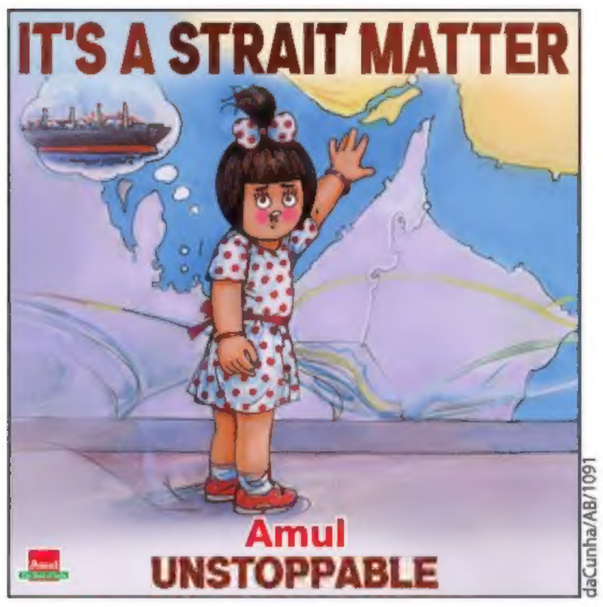

India domestically producing over 60% of the daily LPG requirement, says petroleum ministry

An LPG vessel from Qatar, carrying 17,600 MT cargo, at the Mangalore port on Thursday | PTI

Modi's meet with CMs today

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Friday chair a meeting with chief ministers of all states, except those heading into elections, to discuss the West Asia situation. He is expected to engage separately with chief secretaries of poll-bound states | P11

Israel says it killed Iran's navy chief

AGENCIES @ Dubai

A day after Iran dismissed the US's 15-point de-escalation proposal as "excessive and one-sided", Israel said it has killed Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy chief Alireza Tangsiri and naval intelligence chief Behnam Rezaei.

"Last night, we eliminated IRGC Navy commander. This individual was responsible for the closure of the Strait of Hormuz," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

Israeli defence minister Israel Katz said Tangsiri oversaw the Strait of Hormuz blockade, while Rezai supported the naval operations with maritime intelligence.

Alireza Tangsiri

Iran did not immediately confirm the killings.

The conflict appeared to escalate further on Thursday with both Washington and Tehran hardening their stance.

US President Donald Trump doubled down on his threat saying Iran must "get serious" on negotiating with the US before it's too late, or be prepared to face its "worst nightmare".

Iran continued to pummel Israel and Gulf nations on Thursday. An Indian national was among two killed in Abu Dhabi after debris from intercepted missiles fell on a street. P14

Flames billow from a private bus after it collided with a truck, in Rayavaram, Andhra Pradesh, on Thursday | PTI

14 KILLED IN AP BUS-TRUCK COLLISION

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Ongole

FOURTEEN people were killed after a private bus collided with a gravel-laden truck in Andhra Pradesh's Markapuram district on Thursday morning, and caught fire.

In all, 42 passengers were travelling in the ill-fated sleeper coach bus when the mishap occurred. The other 28 passengers escaped with injuries.

According to sources, the driver lost control when the bus reached Rayavaram slate quarry area, and the bus collided head-on with the truck. The diesel tank of the bus burst due to the impact, engulfing the vehicle in flames. The drivers and cleaners of the bus and truck escaped with injuries.

Fire tenders rushed to the spot and extinguished the flames. The injured were shifted to Markapuram government hospital. Later, three were shifted to Ongole RIMS.

Home minister Vangalapudi Anitha said the bus belonged to Harikrishna Travels of Kanigiri and it had licence up to the end of 2026.

"As per the preliminary inquiry it is clear that it is an accident. However, we have ordered a comprehensive probe into the mishap. Strict action will be taken based on the findings of the probe to avert recurrence of such mishaps in the future," the minister said.

MLAs clamour for free tickets for IPL matches

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IF IPL is here, can politicians be far behind? Cutting across party lines, Karnataka's MLAs have urged the state government to direct the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) to allot them at least four tickets with access to VIP lounge at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium during the IPL matches.

Speaker UT Khader directed Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar to hold discussions with the KSCA and consider reserving four tickets per MLAs along with VIP facilities. The DCM has said he would take up the matter.

The state has 224 MLAs. The KSCA has its ticketing task cut out. CONTINUED ON: P4

EXPRESS INTAKE

Asst prof proposes to student in class, arrested | P3

Karnataka HC issues notice to CM, his wife, others | P4

Hormuz safe passage for friendly India, says Iran

RAKESH KUMAR AND USHA PERI @ New Delhi/Visakhapatnam

DAY 27 | WAR WATCH

IN a major relief for energy supply, Iran on Thursday said the Strait of Hormuz will remain open for India and four other countries amid the conflict in West Asia.

Speaking to Iranian state TV, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi clarified that the strait, contrary to Western media claims, is not completely closed.

"For some countries that we consider friendly, or in cases where we decided to do so for other reasons, our armed forces have provided safe passage," said Araghchi.

The other nations on the safe passage list are Russia, China, Iraq and Pakistan. Before the conflict began, 20% of the world's crude oil supply passed through the strait.

Meanwhile, the petroleum ministry said India is producing much more LPG than it needs to import. India is now producing 50 TMT (50,000 metric tonnes) of LPG a day as against a total daily requirement of around 80 TMT.

Besides, 800 TMT of assured inbound LPG cargoes have already been secured and are en route from the US, Russia, Australia and elsewhere. Two India-flagged LPG tankers — Pine Gas and Jag Vasant — crossed the Strait of Hormuz on Monday and are on their way to India.

The Visakhapatnam Port is set to receive 72 TMT of LPG in three separate shipments beginning Friday. LPG carrier BW Birch is expected on March 27 with 24 TMT of cargo, transshipped from within India. Two additional vessels, Hellas Gladiator and Gas Jupiter, are scheduled to arrive on March 30, each carrying 24 TMT.

While Hellas Gladiator loaded its cargo from the Netherlands, Gas Jupiter is transporting LPG sourced from the US.

Substantial volumes of crude oil are also expected at Vizag. About 99,898 MT of blended crude oil will be brought in by MT Desh Gaurav, which is scheduled to arrive on April 5.

60-day age relaxation for Class I admissions

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a huge relief for parents whose children fail to meet the age cut-off for admissions to Class 1, the Karnataka government on Thursday announced a 60-day relaxation from the six-year age limit in state affiliated schools for the academic year 2026-27. This means that children who are five years and ten month old as of June 1 can get enrolment in Class 1.

"Under Section 20 of Chapter 3 of the Karnataka Education Act 1993, a relaxation of 60 days has been provided," Primary and Secondary Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa told the Legislative Assembly.

As the age criteria also causes problems for LKG and UKG admissions, he said a new law will be brought as soon as possible to make the relaxation a permanent solution.

"Since LKG and UKG are not under any regulatory system, we will bring a regulatory act or rules from the department," he said.

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